



February 22, 2010

The Rattler



The Official Newsletter of Yellowwood / Morgan-Monroe State Forests

Volume 9, 2010

Welcome to the 2010 Newsletter

Welcome to the 2010 edition of the Rattler. Included in this edition are updates on the property's recreation and resource management work. We will update you on activities during the past year and what we are looking forward to in the coming year. Also include in this edition are some of what we are calling "Rules of the Woods". These will provide you some environmental and ethical guidelines to help you and others enjoy their visit to our property. We hope you enjoy this issue and visit our property in the near future.

Sincerely,

Jim Allen Property Manager



Morgan-Monroe Firetower base during snowstorm on February 5th, 2010

2009- A year in Review by Jeremy Kolaks, Assistant Property Manager

Has it already been a year? Things were definitely wild and hectic; making it seem like it was just yesterday. Things started out like any other year. We were plowing snow and planned the year like we thought it was going to happen given the budget situation. Just after we started to implement that plan, we received word that things were not going to be as expected. This change in plans was brought courtesy of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which brought about the formation of the Young Hoosier Conservation Corps (YHCC) in Indiana.

The YHCC, similar to the Young American Conservation Corps, utilized younger Hoosiers who were unemployed, or college students seeking summer work. We were to apply these YHCC crews in accomplishing objectives that were not able to be funded through traditional budget appropriations. As you might imagine, supervising young adults in tasks that many of them had never done before was a challenge. Nonetheless, a lot was accomplished on the property and, in return, many of the participants gained valuable skills. At Yellowwood these accomplishments included the rough-in of

a new shop, replacement of boards on the office deck, and re-roofing the shelter house. At Morgan-Monroe YHCC crews were used rebuild a toilet, weatherize a residence, and restore the fire lookout tower. On both properties they also helped maintain over 30 miles of trails, do timber stand improvement, and complete the day-to-day task of mowing, cleaning restrooms, and general maintenance.

This year has been a little wetter than normal, which put a damper on lots of our outdoor activities. Included in this was the Yellowwood Lake restoration project; which is attempting to restore the silted in portions of the lake by dredging out materials that have been deposited over the past 75, or so, years. Hopefully next year will provide dryer conditions. Otherwise, things went on as normal as could be expected. Forest management and research still continued with flurry this year. In between supervising YHCC crews, foresters were hard at work conducting forest management activities on the property. The Hardwood Ecosystem Project had one of its biggest years, collecting data with more folks than it ever had.

2010 is that 20 10 or 2,010 by Jim Allen, Property Manager

This next year we are looking forward to some exciting happenings at the forest. We have acquired the management responsibilities to the Tulip Trace Girl Scout Camp area. This area is located near TC Steele Historic Site and we plan to hold our open house there on May 8th of this year. This year the property will house students working on our Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment. This is a long-term, large-scale experimental study of forest management and its impacts on plants and animals. Maintaining the oak-hickory forest is one of the major issues that the project is addressing.

We hope to have someone operating the concession at Yellowwood this year. With the closure of Knights Corner the nearest store is no longer near. With

the concession back up and operating it will just be a short trip for our customers to pick up things they need. We hope this will increase their enjoyment of the forest.

If you have not been to Bryant Creek Shelter recently I hope you like what you see. This area received a face lift last year from our Department of Corrections Crew. The shelter was re-roofed, new siding, fireplaces rebuilt, stone picnic rebuilt along painting and other tasks. This crew has started working on Beanblossom Shelter and we hope to complete the renovation of the shelter this year. With reductions in our own staffing we have relied on other labor sources to accomplish projects on the property. We plan to add a second DOC crew this year to help with

renovations at other locations.

The dredging project is not complete as it will take some time to remove the sediment from the lake that has been filling in for over 75 years. This year we plan to use mats to walk equipment out onto the silt and pull them in as we work back toward the shore. The project will likely start in late June and continue through July. This is an in-house project with equipment being rented and our equipment operators doing the work. We have cleared an area across the road from the lake to pile the material we remove and hope to level off the pile on the camp area this year. Although the boat ramp is unusable during the project, boat rental, fishing, camping and all the other activities at the forest continue.

Rules of the Woods- Hunting by Laurie Burgess, Resource Specialist

HUNTING

Both Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe State Forests provide hunting opportunities. Hunters play an important role in keeping game animal populations in check. We are thankful for the cooperation and sportsmanship exhibited by many hunters. To continue a positive hunting experience in our forest, please review the following "rules of the woods".

We are thankful for the cooperation and sportsmanship exhibited by many hunters

Share the woods: The forests are designed for multiple use. Even if it's opening day of gun season there will still be hikers- possibly with their pets, horseback riders, and other outdoor enthusiasts in the woods. Not everyone knows to wear hunter orange, in fact

many visitors may be oblivious to the fact that hunting is allowed as some people confuse state forests with state parks.

Dispose of carcasses properly; not beside your parking spot or dumped randomly along a road. This simple act of hunter etiquette is for all game including deer and fur bearer carcasses.

Wanton waste – killing or crippling any wild animal without making reasonable effort to retrieve it - **is illegal**. Unfortunately this occurs on state forest property and gives a bad name to those hunters complying with the rules.

There are specific regulations for **tree stands** mentioned in the DNR hunting guide. Make note that portable stands may be used on state forest and left overnight only between September 1 and January 10 and must be marked with the owner's name, address and phone number. It is illegal to erect or hunt from a permanent tree blind on state forest. Under no condition should a stand, step, ladder, etc. be bolted, nailed or screwed more than 1/2 inch



into any tree yet, many instances of this are found throughout the forest.

The Indiana DNR publishes a bi-annual hunting and trapping guide. This comprehensive guide contains season dates, rules and regulations, and much more. Please refer to this guide for more detailed information.

Rules of the Woods- Horseback Riding By Amy Zillmer, Resource Specialist

Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe State Forests are home to many multiple use trails that provide abundant hiking and horseback riding opportunities. Whether going out alone or with a group, it is important to follow some basic guidelines to ensure the safety and enjoyment for all users.

Plan Ahead and Be Prepared

Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to your mode of transportation. If riding, make sure all you have all necessary permits (\$20 annual or \$5 daily tag). Have a pre-planned route; carry a map and a compass. Inform someone of your plans. Pay attention to weather forecasts and bring appropriate attire. Know and stay within the limits of your and/or your horse's ability. Bring plenty of water, a first kit, and insect repellent if necessary.



Rules of the Trail

Stay on designated trails. Do not cut switchbacks or take shortcuts. Don't litter and please pick up garbage when you see it. Leave what you find. Avoid introducing or transporting non native species. Respect wildlife. Be considerate of other users. Report vandalism or maintenance

issues to property personnel.

Meeting, Yielding, & Right of Ways

Greet people you meet. Stay to the right and pass on the left. When overtaking someone, announce your intention to pass ("On your left!"). Hikers going uphill are given the right of way to hikers going downhill. Hikers always yield to equestrian users. When meeting a horse rider, hikers should get off trail to the downhill side (spooked horses tend to run uphill). Greet rider quietly and ask them if you are ok where you are. Stand quietly while the horse passes. Horse riders should be prepared to let others know what needs to be done to keep them, the horse, and other trail enthusiasts safe when meeting on the trail. When riding in a group, in general less experienced horses should ride behind more experienced.

Rules of the Woods- Gold Panning By Jeremy Kolaks, Assistant Manager

Though there is often some disbelief when it is mentioned, gold panning is very popular activity on both state forests. In fact, popularity in this past time has more than doubled in the last three years, as indicated by the number of permits issued. Panning for gold on State Forest Property requires a permit, which is currently free and good for one year. However, pending procedural changes have recently dictated that all permits issued after the middle of January have an expiration date of June 30, 2010. The details of these changes are not yet known.

Per provisions set forth by the current permit,

gold panning is purely a recreational activity on State Forest property. The use of picks, shovels, and mechanized equipment, such as dredges and sluice boxes, is prohibited. Excavation of the stream bank or channel is also prohibited. These rules are set in place to prevent stream bank erosion and to ensure that excessive turbidity does not damage aquatic habitat. Furthermore, they help preserve natural stream conditions for other recreational users. Gold panning can provide hours of intrigue and fun. Make sure you get a permit and read the details outlined therein.

To go one step further, gold panning is regu-

lated on private land by the Department of Natural Resources, our parent agency. Though the Division of Forestry does not regulate prospecting on private land, the statute regarding prospecting can be found online at http://www.in.gov/nrc/files/prospecting_navigable_waters.pdf. Good luck and happy panning!

Rules of the Woods- Leave no Trace By Sean Sheldon, Resource Specialist

Leave No Trace is a national program designed to aide forest visitors in reducing their impacts when they hike, camp, picnic, hunt, ride horses, or fish. The Leave No Trace approach to recreation enables managers to provide a cleaner, safer, and more inviting experience for all users.

There are 5 basic principles to Leave No Trace:

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

-To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find

-Preserve the past: do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

-Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

-Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Concentrate use on existing trails

and campsites.

-Walk single file in the middle of the



Indiana Wilderness Club on a winter camp at Yellowwood State Forest

Rules of the Woods- Leave no Trace Program—continued

trail, even when wet or muddy.

-Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

Respect Wildlife

-Never feed animals.

-Store rations and trash securely.

-Control pets at all times.

-Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, or raising young.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

When using the trail:

-Yield to other users on the trail.

-Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.

-Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises

When in the Campground:

-Camp in small groups (no more than the group size prescribed by land managers).

-Select campsites away from other groups to help preserve their solitude.

-Leave forest gates as found (open or

closed) and do not block gates with vehicles.

-Adhere to Quiet Hours.

-Avoid burning plastic in fire rings to reduce foul odors.

For more information on the Leave No Trace program: <http://www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php>

<http://www.usscouts.org/advance/LeaveNoTrace.asp>

Resource Management Update by Dave Vadas, Forester Specialist

2009 was a challenging yet productive year for our resource management staff. A downturn in the economy along with budget restraints left us with 1 forester position being eliminated and an overall DNR vehicle reduction reduced our service fleet. Firewood cutting on the property was at an all time high this past year following a noticeable increase in public permits the past 4 years. This is a normal occurrence due to the extended recession as other heating fuel prices rise and people seek alternative ways to reduce their heating costs. A wetter than normal year resulted in several timber sales having significant harvest & closeout delays. Working between rain showers can be frustrating for logging crews as well as for the supervising forestry staff. Normally our fall seasons are very dry periods however this fall's dry period was very short. On a positive note, our forested stands probably had an exceptional growth year and we experienced very few wildfires. Also, late in the year our property foresters began testing a new procedure to monitor and reduce harvest impacts that should improve our timber harvest monitoring. In spite of all these challenges, the hard work and efforts by our experienced forester staff resulted in most of our fiscal harvest goals being met, forest wildlife habitat & firewood operations were managed and all of our property boundary & inventory goals exceeded.

The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment (HEE) harvests that were initiated in 2006 were all completed in 2009. At

this time Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) projects to complete the group openings in the unevenaged Units and the clearcut & shelterwood openings in the evenaged Units are mostly accomplished. An additional research project on whitetail deer effects on forest regeneration was added to the HEE Project last year with the result of several fenced deer exclosures being set up throughout all the harvest and unharvested (Control) sites. This was a significant undertaking by the Research Staff as many posts and deer fencing had to be acquired, moved into difficult areas and erected in a short time frame. Also, in 2009 the preliminary work for research on nighttime owls was started in November & December. This was a unique cooperative effort by the State Forest staff and local birding groups and enthusiasts to work on these nighttime forest raptors. Surveys for Barred Owls were completed at night in January of 2010 and surveys for resident screech owls will extend into the spring of 2010. Overall, the first year of post harvest data by our State University professors, graduate and undergraduate field technicians has been collected. The accumulation of data on forest wildlife and plant responses to different types of timber harvests is impressive. To view the most current progress on our HEE Project please check online at www.HEEforeststudy.org.

This past year the Department of Natural Resources obtained some federal stimulus money to put to work unemployed youth on several State

Properties under the Young Hoosiers Conservation Corp (YHCC). Our Property was no exception and from June through September we had an active YHCC resource management field crew performing many varied forestry activities. If you were visiting the Forest you may have seen some of them as they wore orange and blue t-shirts. Our resource crew worked on over 20 acres of crop tree release in old regeneration openings, completed nearly 330 acres of grapevine control, planted a field to 720 hardwood trees, treated 45 acres of exotic species, remarked almost 8 miles of property boundary lines, set up 14 deer fence exclosures for the HEE



Project and assisted our foresters with timber sale roadwork and streamside management projects! These youth got experience in day to day activities of forest management that are reminiscent of the days of the Civilian Conservation Corp.

Rules of the Woods- Fishing by Dave Ramey, Resource Specialist

Year round fishing opportunities are available on our six property lakes! Our lakes are: Yellowwood Lake (125 acres), Crooked Creek Lake (11 acres), Bear Lake (9 acres), Bryant Creek Lake (7.5 acres), Cherry Lake (2.5 acres) and Prather Lake (4 acres). Fish found in these lakes include, but are not limited to; bluegill, redear, smallmouth and largemouth bass, catfish, crappie and trout. All lakes are readily accessible and offer great shoreline fishing. Five of these lakes also have improved boat ramps for launching personal watercraft.

Before using any of the boat ramps, thoroughly clean your watercraft to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Before you enter or leave any body of water, remove any visible mud, plants and water from your boat, trailer, bilge, bait wells, etc. Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

Another good fishing directive is to "leave no trace". By carrying out all your fishing equipment, used bait containers, hooks, sinkers, trash and fishing line you'll be a responsible angler. Discarded fishing hooks may be hazardous to wildlife and other lake users, and sinkers that contain lead or zinc may affect the health of fish and wildlife if ingested. To protect the wildlife and the environment, always take any discarded fishing line with you when you leave. Discarded line can snag and kill fish, turtles, frogs, birds and small mammals.

When fishing on public lakes, become familiar with the property rules and regulations. A valid fishing license is required. Know the fishing equip-



Fishing on Yellowwood Lake spillway provides a good opportunity for children to catch fish

ment/gear you may or may not use; the size limits for particular species; and the bag limits or daily maximum you may catch. Boat motors on our property lakes are limited to electric trolling motors only. All watercraft must have an annual lake permit and personal flotation devices on all DNR lakes.

Fishing is a fun activity for individuals and families and can be enjoyed by all ages. Respect your fellow angler, be responsible and please carry out your trash or properly dispose of waste in property trash receptacles. For more information about other fishing opportunities on state properties refer to the Indiana Fishing Guide or visit the DNR Web site at fish-ing.IN.gov.

Firewood Cutting by Dave Vadas, Forester Specialist

The State Forest firewood cutting program is provided to the public as a resource for supplying fuel for home heating purposes only. The resale of this firewood is not permitted. Commercial permits however are available. The

availability of firewood on the Property is limited to supply and environmental conditions. A valid permit must be obtained prior to cutting. These written permits are available at each Forest Office during regular work hours. Please contact the Forest Office prior to coming as office hours vary throughout the week and year. The office number for MMSF

is (765) 342-4026 and for YWSF is (812) 988-7945. Issued permits will describe the cutting location and allowed cutting period. Permits can be issued for up to 5 days so that cutting can occur after



Property work hours or during weekends when Forest Offices may be closed. Permits must be in your possession during all cutting activity. No standing or leaning trees may be cut; cut only material completely on the ground.

Retrieval of wood is limited to passive methods only such as hand packing or wheelbarrows; no motorized equipment, chains or cables are allowed. Seasonally available gate keys can be issued to access recently harvested areas but must be returned within 7 days of issue. Keys not returned promptly will result in a loss of your firewood cutting privilege. Roadside permits are generally available year-round and may be your only option during inclement weather. While cutting along roadsides vehicles must remain within the road right-of-way. Any woody materials not hauled must be returned beyond the

All firewood cut in Brown or Monroe County can move among these two counties but are prohibited by State Statute to move outside them due to the possible spread of the Emerald Ash Borer.

maintained portion of the road. Our Property is not responsible for stuck vehicles or damaged equipment. Currently the cost is only \$3.00 per rick and permits are limited to 20 ricks per calendar year. All firewood cut in Brown or Monroe County can move among these two counties but are prohibited by State Statute to move outside them due to the possible spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. Firewood cut in Morgan County has no movement restrictions. Failure to follow firewood cutting rules and the State Quarantine Rules will result in the loss of future wood cutting privileges, criminal fines and/or property eviction.

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Mission Statement:

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Division of Forestry promotes and practices good stewardship of natural, recreational and cultural resources on Indiana's public and private forest lands. This stewardship produces continuing benefits, both tangible and intangible, for present and future generations.

OPEN HOUSE

We are hosting an open house to show off our new property formally called the Tulip Trace Girl Scout Camp located off TC Steel Road

Saturday, May 8th from 10 AM to 2 PM

Light refreshments
provided

Directions to open house;

Take Highway 46 to Belmont and turn at the sign to TC Steel Historic Site. After passing the historic site look for signs on the left hand side of the road. Follow signs to the open house location.

